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Message Text

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15
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 /068 W
---------- 047168
R 230905Z AUG 75
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5914
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 10699

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, LE
SUBJECT: INTERNAL LEBANESE SITUATION - TAQLA'S VIEWS

1. DURING COURSE OF GENERAL CONVERSATION AUGUST 22, FON MIN TAQLA DISCUSSED INTERNAL LEBANESE SITUATION. SAID HE WAS RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC AND BELIEVED THAT SOME OF THE DANGER OF ROUND 4 OF INTERNAL FIGHTING HAD PASSED AND THERE WAS REASON TO HOPE THAT FURTHER CIVIL STRIFE COULD BE AVOIDED. TAQLA OPINED THAT ONE OF THE TURNING POINTS WAS ABOUT A MONTH AGO WHEN BACCALAUREATE EXAMINATIONS WERE GIVEN WITHOUT INCIDENT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY NOTWITHSTANDING FEARS AND SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE LEFT MIGHT ENDEAVOR TO SABOTAGE THEIR BEING HELD (TAQLA IS ALSO MINISTER OF EDUCATION). TAQLA SAID HE WAS RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO NIBBLE AWAY AT SOME OF THE CONTENTIOUS ISSUES. HE EXPLAINED THE NIBBLING BY NOTING THAT THE MAJOR ISSUES DIVIDING THE COUNTRY SUCH AS THE PRESIDENCY COULD NOT BE TACKLED BUT THAT CURRENT GOVERNMENT MIGHT ATTACK LESS FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS
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EXCLUDING PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM MINISTERIAL POSITIONS,

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REORGANIZING THE ARMY'S ADMINISTRATION, REVIEWING NATIONAL-
ITY LAWS, INITIATING SOCIAL LEGISLATION, ETC.

2. TAQLA ALSO SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGED BY THE OPPOSITION
HE IS NOTING AMONG MODERATE CHRISTIANS TO THE CHRISTIAN FAR
RIGHT. SOME OF THIS HE ATTRIBUTES TO THE RECENTLY ELECTED
MARONITE PATRIARCH WHOSE MODERATION HAS BEEN FELT IN THE
MARONITE COMMUNITY.

3. I BELIEVE TAQLA'S POINTS ARE WELL TAKEN. WE ARE NOT
YET IN ANY WAY OUT OF THE WOODS. THERE SEEMS, HOWEVER, TO
BE A GROWING GENERAL FEELING THAT ROUND 4 CAN BE AVOIDED
(OR PROVOCATIONS EFFECTIVELY CONTAINED) AND THAT THE
GOVERNMENT IS ENDEAVORING TO FACE UP TO ITS RESPONSIBILITIES
AND TO DEAL WITH SOME OF THE MORE PRESSING POLITICAL,
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS.
GODLEY

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